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to point to a hospital for the insane, second to no other in the country in all those qualities that indicate the highest degree of efficiency for the performance of its destined work.

ART. IV. — *A Memoir of* REV. SYDNEY SMITH, *by his Daughter, LADY HOLLAND, with a Selection from his Letters, by* MRS. AUSTIN. In two volumes. New York: Harper and Brothers. 1855.

THE memoir and correspondence of a man who, for twenty years, was prominent in London society, and pointed out to strangers as eminently noteworthy, must give a reliable insight not only into his personal gifts and character, but into the tendencies and the traits of the circle in which he held so conspicuous a place. In both regards, these volumes justify the anticipation they excite. Here we see portrayed, without exaggeration, the best side of the Churchman, — one of the highest places open to clerical ambition in England, — its lustre enhanced by intelligence, its exclusiveness redeemed by geniality, and its validity vindicated by uprightness and public spirit. We recognize the influence and the happiness that may be attained by a kindly, conscientious, fearless, candid dignitary of the Establishment, whose nature is leavened by a rich and persuasive humor, whereby his office, conversation, letters, and presence are lifted from technicality and routine into vital relations with his fellow-beings and the time. Pleasant and suggestive is the record, full of amenity, and bright with cheerful traits. It is refreshing to meet with so much life, so much liberality, so much humane sentiment, where the conventional and the obsolete so often overlay and formalize mind and manner. Yet there is a distinct limit to this satisfaction. The vantage-ground which ecclesiastical *prestige* gave to Sydney Smith, his talents and agreeability confirmed; but his sympathies, with all their free play, had a conservative rebound. Those who would derive a complete idea of the modern English development from these memorials, err. He

moved in a circle of the most active, but not of the highest intellectual range. We should never discover from this chronicle that Coleridge also talked, Carlyle reasoned, Lamb jested, Hazlitt criticised, and Shelley and Keats sang, in those days. Within the sensible zone of English life, as that term is usually understood, Sydney lived. He often ignored what was boldly original and radically independent. His scope was ever within the Whig ranks in politics and the Established Church pale in religion. What could be beheld and experienced therein we see, and all that excites admiration without is unrevealed. The iron horizon of caste is the framework of this attractive picture. The charm it offers is the manliness which a true soul, thus environed, exhibits. To us Transatlantic lovers of his rare humor, it is the man rather than the priest, the companion rather than the prodigy, that wins attention.

We have seen, again and again, genius utterly perverted by self-love, usefulness marred by fanaticism, wit poisoned by malevolence, health shattered, existence abridged, vanity pampered, confidence destroyed, by the erratic, unprincipled, weak use of intellectual gifts. This tragic result is the staple of literary biography, so that prudent souls have blessed the fate which consigned them to harmless mediocrity. The rare and sweet exceptions to so general a rule are therefore full of satisfaction and redolent of hope. In the case of Sydney Smith we witness the delightful spectacle of a mind that bravely regulates the life which it cheers and adorns. Humor was the efflorescence of his intellect, the play that gave him strength for labor, the cordial held by a kindly hand to every brother's lips, the sunshine of home, the flavor of human intercourse, the music to which he marched in duty's rugged path. By virtue of this magic quality, he redeemed the daily meal from heaviness, the needful journey from fatigue, narrow circumstances from depression, and prosperity from materialism. He illustrated simultaneously the power of content and the beauty of holiness. Did Portland stone, instead of marble, frame his hearth? Innocent mirth and a clear blaze made those around it oblivious of the defect. Must a paper border take the place of a cornice? Laughing echoes hung the room with more

than arabesque ornament. Were the walls destitute of precious limning? He knew how to glorify them with sunshine. Did he lack costly furniture? Children and roses atoned for the want. Was he compelled to entertain his guest with rustic fare? He found compensation in the materials thus furnished for a comic sketch. Did the canine race interfere with his comfort? He banished them by a mock report of law-damages. Was his steed ugly, slow, and prone to throw his rider? He named him "Calamity" or "Peter the Cruel," and drew a farce from their joint mishaps. Was his coach lumbering and ancient? Its repairs were for ever suggestive of quaint fancies. Was a herd of deer beyond his means? He fastened antlers on donkeys, and drew tears of laughter from aristocratic eyes. Did the evergreens look dim at Christmas? He tied oranges on their boughs and dreamed of tropical landscapes. Was a lady too fine? He discovered a "porcelain understanding." Was a friend too voluble? He enjoyed his "flashes of silence." Were oil and spermaceti beyond his means? He illuminated the house with mutton lamps of his own invention. A fat woman, a hot day, a radical, a heavy sermonizer, a dandy, a stupid Yorkshire peasant,—people and things that in others would only excite annoyance,—he turned instinctively to the account of wit. His household at Foston is a picture worthy of Dickens. Bunch, Annie Kay, Molly Miles,—heraldry, old pictures, and china,—in his atmosphere became original characters and bits of Flemish still-life, which might set up a novelist. He turned a bay-window into a hive of bright thoughts, and a random walk into a chapter of philosophy. To domestic animals, humble parishioners, rustic *employés*, to the oppressed, the erring, the sick, the market-woman, and the poacher, he extended as ready and intelligent a sympathy as to the nobleman and the scholar. He was more thankful for animal spirits and good companionship than for reputation and preferment. He revered material laws not less than the triumphs of intellect; esteemed poor Richard's maxims as well as Macaulay's rhetoric; thought self-reproach the greatest evil, and occupation the chief moral necessity of existence. He believed in talking nonsense, while he exercised the most vigorous powers of reasoning. He gave no quarter

to cant, and, at the same time, bought a parrot to keep his servants in good humor. If warned by "excellent and feeble people" against an individual, he sought his acquaintance. His casual *bon-mots* wreathed the town with smiles, and his faithful circumspection irritated the officials at St. Paul's. He wielded a battle-axe in the phalanx of reform, and scattered flowers around his family altar. He wakened the sinner's heart to penitence, and irradiated prandial monotony; educated children, and shared the counsels of statesmen; turned from literary correspondence to dry an infant's tears, and cheered a pauper's death-bed with as true a heart as he graced a peer's drawing-room. It is the human, catholic range and variety of such a nature and such a life, that raises Sydney Smith from the renown of a clever author and a brilliant wit to the nobler fame of a Christian man.

In this biography we have another signal instance of the effect of blood in determining character. The Gallic element permeated Sydney's Anglo-Saxon nature; and in him it was the vivacity of Languedoc that quickened the solemn banquets of the Thames. By instinct no less than from principle, he encouraged cheerfulness. He thoroughly appreciated the relation of mind and body, and sought, by exercise, gay talk, and beneficent intercourse, while he avoided self-reproach and systematized business, to lessen the cares and to multiply the pleasures of daily life. The minor felicities were in his view as much a part of human nature, as the power of reasoning and the capacity of usefulness. In his endeavor to make the most of life as a means of enjoyment, he was thoroughly French; in loyalty to its stern requirements and high objects, he was no less completely English. In practical wisdom he resembled Dr. Franklin, in the genuine benignity of his spirit, Bishop Berkeley, and in the power of colloquial adaptation, Burke. He sublimated Poor Richard's prudence by tact and wit; and called himself an "amalgam" from the facility with which his genial tone fused the discordant or reserved social elements around him. "Some sulk," he observes, "in a stage; I always talk." He was no abstract scholar or isolated sage, but read and wrote in the midst of his family, undisturbed by children, servants, or visitors. His idea of life and duty was

eminently social; and in this also we recognize the influence of his French descent. The names of friends, acquaintances, and correspondents in these volumes include a remarkable variety of illustrious characters; first, the famous Edinburgh *coterie*, — Playfair, Stewart, Brougham, Scott, Alison, Jeffrey, Horner, and their associates; then, the authors and statesmen he knew so intimately in London, such as Lord Holland, Lord Grey, Mackintosh, Rogers, and Moore; then his Continental friends, Madame de Stael, Pozzo di Borgo, Talleyrand, the King of Belgium, and many more; besides the domestic and clerical associates incident to his position and family connections. Imagine a good, cheerful, wise, and endeared man, for thirty years, mingling in such spheres, dispensing words of cheer and humor, yet always in earnest as a divine, and always faithful as a reformer, and you have a picture of intellectual usefulness and enjoyment, of a healthy, active mind, which suggests a living worth but inadequately described in these volumes. Scotchmen and Quakers have been staple themes with the English wits for a century; Dr. Johnson and Charles Lamb were memorably comical about them; and Sydney Smith continued the merry warfare with credit. In each of the *coteries* represented by these idols of society, we find that the “mutual admiration” principle, so natural to special fraternities, holds sway. Johnson over-estimated, while he browbeat, his literary *confrères*; Lamb betrays a childlike devotion to Coleridge and his disciples; and Sydney Smith praises Jeffrey’s articles, Horner’s character, and Mackintosh’s talk with like partiality. This is but the instinct of the love and honor drawn out by intimate association; but such verdicts, in a critical point of view, are to be taken with due allowance, — not so much in regard to the merits of the individuals thus warmly regarded, as of contemporaries not belonging to the same clique, yet, in an intellectual aspect, having equal and often superior claims upon the lover of genius and worth.

As a representative man, Sydney Smith was more endeared for his liberal, frank, and mirthful nature than for its refinements. He lacked that profound sense of beauty, and that patient love of art, which constitute poetical feeling. He felt no interest in Wordsworth, thought Madame de Sévigné’s

letters beneath their reputation, and declared himself satisfied with ten minutes of Talma's acting and fifteen of observation at the Louvre. His passion for roses seems to have been rather a keen sense of their vital freshness, than a delicate perception of their beauty. They were precious in his sight chiefly as emblems of the spontaneous grace of nature. He delighted in transitions both of scene and of employment. He read with great rapidity, skimming as with hasty glances the cream of literature. He had the ingenuous want of artificial elegance so often noticed as characteristic of manly genius. "Sydney," said one of his friends, "your sense, wit, and clumsiness always give me the idea of an Athenian carter."

The combination "most devoutly to be wished" is an alert mind and an easy temperament; but the two are seldom found together. Quickness of conception and aptness of fancy are often embodied in a mercurial frame, and the nervous and sanguine quality of the body is a constant strain upon vital force, and tends to produce the irritability of a morbid or the grave errors of an animal enthusiasm. Hence the most famous wits have seldom proved equally satisfactory as intimate companions and judicious allies in a serious enterprise. Imprudence, impulse, and extreme sensitiveness, thus united to uncommon gifts of mind, are liable to make the latter more of a bane than a blessing; while the same endowments blended with a happy organization are the prolific source of active usefulness and rational delight. Seldom have these results been more perfectly exhibited than in Sydney Smith, — a pioneer of national reforms without acrimony or fanaticism; prompt to "set the table in a roar," yet never losing self-respect or neglecting the essential duties of life; capable of the keenest satire, yet instinctively considerate of the feelings of others; familiar with the extremes of fortune, yet unhardened by poverty and unspoiled by success; the choicest of boon companions, yet the most impressive of clergymen; the admired guest and the recipient of permanent and elegant hospitality, yet contented in domestic retirement; born to grace society, and, at the same time, the idol of home; feasted and honored in the highest degree, yet true to his own

axiom, that the secret of felicity is to "make the day happy to, at least, one fellow-creature"; with a deep-seated "disgust at hypocrisy," while recognized as the bravest advocate of Christian charity in the Church; impatient to the last degree of the irksome and commonplace, yet unwearied in his endeavor to assimilate the discordant and to enliven the dull. In him, the soul and the body, the family and the fête, labor and pastime, criticism and hilarity, wit and wisdom, virtue and intelligence, priesthood and manhood, the pen and the life, the friend and the disputant, the mysteries of faith and the actualities of experience, "worked together for good."

Though comprehensive and facile as an intellectual man, he had the insular stamp, — the honest alloy of British prejudice, — frankly confessing that he thought no organized form of Christianity worthy to be compared with the Establishment, no beauty or genius equal to that which the best London circle includes, no physical comfort like a good fire, no restorative like a walk, and no talkers superior to Mackintosh, Macaulay, and the rest of his own coterie. His praise of good edibles and well-written books, his thorough honesty, his manly self-assertion, his want of sympathy with foreign associations, his keen appreciation of dinner, tea, argument, and home, mark the genuine Angloman. Yet he had a clearer sense than most of his countrymen of native peculiarities. "Have you observed," he asks, "that nothing can be done in England without a dinner?" And elsewhere he observes, "Mr. John Bull disdains to talk, as that respected individual has nothing to say." With the courage of his race he "passed his life in minorities," and, on principle, fought off the spleen. "Never give way to melancholy," he writes to a friend; "resist it steadily, for the habit will encroach."

His love of knowledge was strong and habitual; and he sought it, with avidity, in social intercourse, observation, and books, reproducing what he gleaned with ease and acuteness. His style partakes of the directness of his whole nature; he goes at once to his subject, whether the exposition of religious truth, a definition in moral philosophy, a business epistle, or "a word spoken in season." Without circumlocution, and with the prompt brevity of a man of action, the thing to be

expressed is given out, interrupted only by some merry jest or humorous turn of thought,—never by an elaborate or discursive episode. His letters are singularly brief and to the point; they indicate character by their kindly spirit and quaint vein, frank opinions and excellent sense, but are valuable rather as glimpses of his manner of living and thinking, of his associations and objects, than as a complete illustration of the man. There is a marked individuality in the most casual note. He does not write with the rhetorical finish of Macaulay, the quaint introversions of Carlyle, the voluble knowledge of De Quincey, the smart ebullitions of Jeffrey, or the classic elegance of Landor; but he writes like an honest, sensible, prosperous, affectionate, witty Englishman, whose views, tastes, and principles are fixed, and who desires, without waste of time or words, to meet every duty and every pleasure in an intelligent, self-sustained, and generous mood. The clerical and literary, the political and culinary, the friendly and professional interests of his life, come out in singular juxtaposition through his correspondence. Now it is a state question, and now the receipt for dressing a salad; one day, to acknowledge a present of game, and another, to criticise a new number of the *Edinburgh*; this letter describes a dinner-party, and that a plan for church organization; one proposes an article, and another chronicles a tour;—the whole conveying a vivid idea of a most busy, social, amicable, cheerful existence. After dwelling on the entire picture, we can readily believe, with his little daughter, that “a family does n’t prosper without a papa who makes all gay by his own mirth”; and that a dinner without him appeared to his bereaved wife unutterably solemn. He declares that a play never amused him; neither would it half the world, if there were more Sydneys in social life, to make every day’s talk “as good as a play.” He speaks of the “invincible candor of his nature,” and this trait is the crystal medium through which we so thoroughly recognize him.

Notwithstanding the deserved rebuke he administered to our national delinquency in his American letters, he vindicates his claim to the title of Philo-Yankeeist. No British writer has better appreciated the institutions and destiny of the

United States. He recognized cordially the latent force of Webster, the noble eloquence of Channing, and the refined scholarship of Everett. "I will disinherit you," he playfully writes to a fair correspondent, "if you do not admire everything written by Franklin."

Perhaps the choicest lesson of his life is his practical cheerfulness. He was no willing polemic, but delighted in "peaceable bigotry." One is constantly lured, by this memoir, to speculate on the relation of humor to sensibility and caution; for its subject was as prudent and methodical in affairs as he was vagrant and lawless in fancy, and as keenly alive to sympathy and care for others as to comfort, society, and fun. "I have," he says, "a propensity to amuse myself with trifles." "The wretchedness of human life is only to be encountered on the basis of beef and wine." And, elsewhere, "If, with a pleasant wife, three children, a good house and farm, many books, and many friends who wish me well, I cannot be happy, I am a very silly, foolish fellow, and what becomes of me is of very little consequence." This disposition was not merely a background in the landscape; it made him a light-hearted, though none the less earnest worker. The sermon inculcating the deepest truth, the essay demolishing a time-hallowed error, the plea for some victim of oppression or indigence, the letter designed to counsel or cheer, the speech in behalf of civil reform, — in fine, the entire intellectual activity of the man was unalloyed by discontent and bitterness. He could wrestle with wrong, and smile; he could attack without losing his temper; he could sow the pregnant seeds of melioration, and, at the same time, scatter flowers of wit along the rugged furrows. Swift fought as bravely, but he lacked the *bonhomme* of Sydney to make the battle gay and chivalrous. Sterne diverted, with like ease, a festal board; but he wanted the consistent manhood of Peter Plymley to preserve the dignity of his office in the midst of pastime.

Literature has gradually merged the courageous in the artistic element. Style, instead of being the vehicle of moral warfare and practical truth, has degenerated into an ingenious means of aimless effect. To elaborate a borrowed or flimsy

idea, to exaggerate a limited and unimportant experience, and to minister exclusively to the sense of amusement, have become the primal objects of popular writers. They have, in numerous instances, ignored the relation of thought to action, of integrity to expression, and of truth to eloquence. They have dreamed, dallied, coquetted on paper exactly as the butterflies of life do in society, giving no impression of individuality or earnestness. To divert a vacant hour, to beguile, flatter, puzzle, and relieve the ennui of thoughtless minds, appears the height of their ambition. The conventional, the lighter graces, the egotistic inanities of self-love, so predominant, that we gain no fresh impulse, receive no mental *stimuli*, behold no veil of error rent, and no vista of truth opened as we read. The man of letters is often, to our consciousness, not a prophet, an oracle, a hero, but a juggler, a pet, or, at best, a graceful toy. We realize the old prejudice, that to write for the public amusement is a vocation based on unmanly pliancy, — a mercenary pursuit which inevitably conflicts with self-respect, deals in gossip, and trenches on the dignity of social refinement. Personal contact not seldom destroys whatever illusion taste may have created. We find an evasive habit of mind, an effeminate care of reputation, a fear of self-compromise, a dearth of original, frank, genial utterance. Our ideal author proves a mere *dilettante*, says pretty things as if committed to memory for the occasion, picks ingenious flaws to indicate superior discernment, interlards his talk with quotations, is all things to all men, and especially to all women, makes himself generally agreeable by a system of artificial conformity, and leaves us unrefreshed by a single glimpse of character or one heart-felt utterance. We strive to recognize the thinker and the poet, but discover only the man of taste, the man of the world, the fop, or the epicure; and we gladly turn from him to a fact of nature, to a noble tree or a sunset cloud, to the genuine in humanity, — a fair child, an honest mechanic, true-hearted woman, or old soldier, — because in such there is not promise without performance, the sign without the thing, the name without the soul. It is from the salient contrast with these familiar phases of authorship that the very idea of such a man as Sydney Smith redeems

the calling. In him, first of all and beyond all, is manhood, which no skill in pen-craft, no blandishment of fame or love of pleasure, was suffered to overlay for a moment. To be a man in courage, generosity, stern faith to every domestic and professional claim, in the fear of God and the love of his kind, in loyalty to personal conviction, bold speech, candid life, and good fellowship, — this was the vital necessity, the normal condition, of his nature. Thus consecrated, he found life a noble task and a happy experience, and would have found it so without any Edinburgh Review, Cathedral of St. Paul's, or dinners at Holland House; although, when the scope and felicities they brought to him came, — legitimate results of his endowments and needs, — they were, in his faithful hands and wise appreciation, the authentic means of increased usefulness, honor, and delight; and chiefly so, because he was so disciplined and enriched by circumstances and by natural gifts, as to be virtually independent, self-sustained, and capable of deriving mental luxury, philosophic content, and religious sanction from whatever lot and duty had fallen to his share. Herein lie the significance of his example and the value of his principles. Like pious and brave old Herbert, he found a kingdom in his mind which he knew how to rule and to enjoy; and this priceless boon was his triumph and comfort in the lowliest struggles and in the highest prosperity. It irradiated the damp walls of his first parsonage with the glow of wit, nerved his heart, as a poor vicar, to plead the cause of reform against the banded conservatives of a realm, hinted a thousand expedients to beguile isolation and indigence of their gloom, invested his presence and speech with self-possession and authority in the peasant's hut and at the bishop's table, made him an architect, a physician, a judge, a school-master, a critic, a reformer, the choicest man of society, the most efficient of domestic economists, the best of correspondents, the most practical of political writers, the most impressive of preachers, the most genial of companions, a good farmer, a patient nurse, and an admirable husband, father, and friend. The integrity, good sense, and moral energy which gave birth to this versatile exercise of his faculties, constitute the broad and solid foundation of Sydney Smith's character; they were

the essential traits of the man, the base to that noble column of which wit formed the capital and wisdom the shaft. In the temple of humanity what support it yielded during his life, and how well-proportioned and complete it now stands to the eye of memory, an unbroken and sky-pointing cenotaph on his honored grave!

ART. V.—1. *The Papal Conspiracy exposed, and Protestantism defended, in the Light of Reason, History, and Scripture.*

By EDWARD BEECHER, D. D. Boston: Stearns & Co. 12mo. pp. 432.

2. *Ecclesiastical Tenures. Speech of JAMES O. PUTNAM, of Buffalo, on the Bill providing for the Vesting of the Title to Church Property in Lay Trustees, delivered in the Senate of New York, January 30, 1855.* Albany: Benthuisen. 8vo. pp. 40.

NEARLY twelve centuries have passed since the Papal hierarchy assumed a rank among the nations of the world. In the beginning it exhibited the weakness of infancy. As it advanced in years it grew in strength, until, at the midnight of the Dark Ages, it overshadowed and controlled all Europe. Those who still submit to its power assign to it an earlier origin. They place the name of the Apostle Peter at the head of their list of Popes, deducing his authority from Jesus Christ; and from Peter they pretend to trace an unbroken succession of Bishops of Rome, in process of time called Popes, to the two hundred and sixty-third Pope, now on the pontifical throne. That Peter was the first Bishop of Rome, or ever resided there, receives, however, no support from authentic history.

In primitive times every Christian church elected its bishop, or overseer, that being the meaning of the Greek word translated bishop. These bishops, as well as the churches they were chosen to oversee, were unconnected with one another, were all equal in power, and so continued through the first three centuries of the Christian era. It is true that younger